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TREASURY HOLDS 5TH ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

In its Fifth Annual Awards Ceremony, Treasury honored 132 employees on October 11 for outstanding service and significant operational contributions. In the fiscal year ended last June 30, Treasury employees received more than \$620,000 in awards for improving Treasury operations.

Among those recognized at the awards ceremony, held at the Departmental Auditorium, Washington, D.C., were:

- Two persons who received the Alexander Hamilton Award for demonstrating outstanding leadership while working closely with the Secretary.
- 60 persons, who during the year had received either of the Treasury's two top awards, for Exceptional Service or for Meritorious Service.
- 31 employees who, through outstanding suggestions or service, contributed to significant monetary savings, increased efficiency, or distinct improvements in government service.
- 29 employees for excellence in furthering special administrative programs.
- Ten supervisors, for notable achievements in encouraging employee contributions to efficiency and economy.

The awards were presented by Secretary Fowler, who also honored six Treasury bureaus. The Bureau of the Mint was cited for outstanding participation in the performance phase of Treasury Department's Incentive Awards Program. The Bureau of Accounts was recognized for outstanding achievement in its suggestions program. The Bureau of Customs was commended for its action to improve communications and services to the public, especially at port facilities. The Internal Revenue Service was singled out for leadership in cost reduction and management improvement resulting in fiscal year savings of more than \$16 million. The Secret Service was recognized for its safety record among bureaus with 1,000 or more employees. The Savings Bonds Division earned the privilege of permanently retaining the plaque for safety for its record among bureaus with fewer than 1,000 employees.

REVIEWING -- AN AREA THAT INVITES INQUIRY

Much effort has been expended on improving the writing ability of Federal employees, but little has been done to improve the equally difficult art of reviewing. Yet, anyone who has worked in a bureaucratic environment recognizes that irrational review practices are a major cause of bottlenecks and loss of productivity. Because of these practices, letters are released too late to achieve their purposes; typing facilities are overloaded; and originators of correspondence must give more attention to getting their material past the reviewers than to communicating with the addressees.

Reviews can be highly beneficial, and most writers welcome a review which catches errors which might cause embarrassment or extra work. Unfortunately many reviews result in nothing more than wasted effort and frustrations. Some of the causes of poor review practices are:

Personal aversions to certain words and phrases even though they are generally accepted by grammarians and writers. A letter or document prepared in final form represents an investment of Federal funds. No one should nullify this investment because of purely personal preferences.

Excessive fastidiousness on rules. Many of the arbitrary rules of a generation ago no longer are accepted by progressive grammarians. Clear, effective writing, consistent with generally accepted modern usage, should be the criterion.

Exaggerated efforts to achieve brevity. Brevity may be the essence of literary merit, but to achieve it requires work, time, and a measure of

talent. A reviewer who rejects material because he finds that he is able to eliminate an occasional word or phrase is not saving work but causing it.

Change to justify the review. There seems to be a distinct tendency on the part of some reviewers to feel that the value of their review is in direct proportion to the number of "improvements" they are able to make. Most written material can be improved ad infinitum, but we are not required to turn out literary gems.

Vague speculation on what higher levels of review will accept. Here we are drawing a sharp distinction between knowledge and speculation. Not infrequently reviewers will turn back material which is acceptable to them but possibly might be rejected by someone at a higher organizational level. Few second guessers can boast high validity coefficients.

Refusal to make simple pen changes on memos and letters. Many of us find it difficult to accept this practice, even though no one really believes that the Government is composed of anyone other than ordinary mortals who occasionally make errors or change their minds. The image we create will be improved when people see that we are trying to save money and speed up the processes of Government.

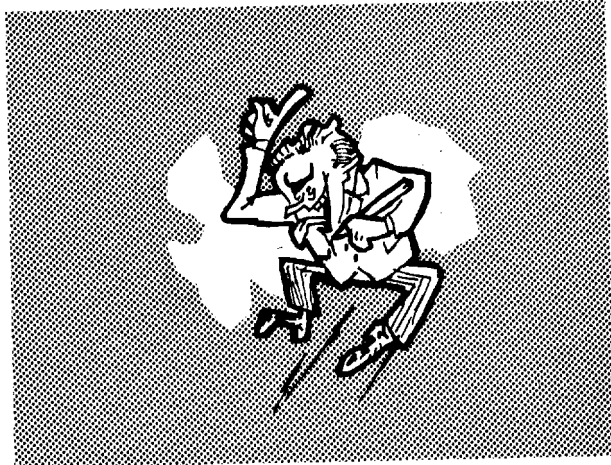
Inconsistencies of reviews. Every originator of written material is aware that his ability to get his material by reviewers is dependent to some extent on the changing moods of reviewers. If a reviewer is going through a period of insecurity, it may be extremely difficult to obtain his approval on a simple memo.

To avoid, or at least minimize these irrational review practices, one simple criterion is suggested:

Will the letter or document achieve the objective for which it is intended without causing delay, confusion, ill-will, or reflecting unfavorably on the originating office or agency?

If a letter or document meets this criterion, it should be approved. Of course, efforts should be continued to improve correspondence, but this can be achieved best through training and practice. It need not and should not be achieved at the expense of needlessly delaying essential communications.

Reprinted from "BUWEPS Daily Log" of March 13, 1963. Navy Dept.



Nit-picking Ned

Demands perfection in letters. Keeps sending letters back for re-typing to correct trivial errors. Never permits a letter to go by without changing at least one word.

WHITE ADDRESSES PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

On September 24, B. Frank White, Southwest Regional Commissioner of IRS, addressed a joint meeting in Washington of the Inter-Bureau Public Services Committee and the Department's Alternate Management Committee.

Speaking on "Management of a Public Services Program" Mr. White told of the development of the program to improve public services, beginning with his own personal review and critique of the correspondence of his district directors and of IRS form letters. Mr. White found, for instance, that having his employees sign their own letters had a very salutary effect on the letters' quality.

The Southwest Region has also emphasized improving office space and furnishings. Offices are now show places in which employees can take pride which present a pleasing appearance to the public, and which

are organized for the convenience of the public. For example, the New Orleans District Office has installed an attractive and efficient "one-stop" taxpayer assistance area. Instead of being directed around a Federal building or to several buildings, taxpayers now may go to the one center where six different tax services are provided.

In addition the Dallas Region has concentrated on briefing and training sessions for personnel of the news media to improve their understanding of IRS policies and problems.

Mr. White believes that an employee who has a job that he finds stimulating and satisfying is not likely to act in a disgruntled or unpleasant manner when he deals with the public. He advocates examining job content of employees with public contacts to assure that such jobs are really satisfying basic human needs.

PUBLIC SERVICE: THE EXTRA STEP

--Seven persons whose jobs ceased to exist as a result of the civil disorders in Washington in April 1968 were given one-month temporary appointments by the Bureau of the Public Debt. Four, including a severely handicapped individual, have been retained on a permanent basis.

--A recent incident in Tennessee demonstrates that Federal tax collectors don't always get the last drop of blood. While interviewing a taxpayer, an IRS employee in the Nashville district office learned that the taxpayer's wife needed a costly transfusion. Result: the wife got her blood, donated courtesy of concerned and sympathetic employees who took an opportunity to help in a generous, personal way.

--In June 1968 an area in Iowa was hit by a destructive tornado. The IRS district office in Des Moines responded immediately by screening all audit cases pending in the disaster localities to provide automatic extensions and other special considerations to minimize inconveniences to taxpayers during the recovery period. A team of IRS personnel was then dispatched to the disaster area to join with local officials in a public meeting to assist the citizens affected. The District Director also made a special visit to the area to publicize the tax assistance available to them and to express his concern for the losses that people suffered.

--Certain clerical and machine operator positions in the Washington office of the Bureau of the Public Debt have been redesigned to remove routine tasks that were then established at a lower grade, with correspondingly reduced qualification requirements. These new jobs are now being filled, for the most part, by older persons and by high school drop-outs who are unable to qualify for higher grades. Nearly all of the appointees are among the disadvantaged and are of minority groups. With experience and training, it is anticipated that these employees can perform, and be promoted to, higher-level work.

--A "Career Club" has been established in Oakland, California, by IRS personnel. The club, for youngsters aged 16 to 18 from disadvantaged minority groups, has 45 members. Through the efforts of the San Francisco regional and district offices, 28 of the 34 members who sought summer jobs were placed in private or Federal employment.

--The Department's exhibit room has been moved from the second to the first floor in the Main Treasury Building which will increase its size by three times. A separate direct entrance from the street will make the area more convenient to visitors, 110,000 of whom toured the exhibit in 1967. Departmental representatives are working with the Bureaus and professionals from the Smithsonian to provide an attractive exhibit with a central theme and continuous film showings of Treasury activities.